

Title Postharvest studies on the bird of paradise flower, *Strelitzia regina*
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Abstract

The postharvest life of the inflorescences of *Strelitzia regina*, the Bird of Paradise is limited by the life of the individual flowers, the number of flowers that open, and, reportedly, by susceptibility to chilling injury. Previous studies have suggested pulsing with sugar to improve flower opening, but reports on the effect of growth regulators have been mixed. Our experiments show that the effects of pulsing with sucrose are greatly enhanced by addition of thidiazuron, a non-metabolizable cytokinin, which further improves opening, and of gibberellic acid, which extends the life of the individual florets. Obvious chilling injury in *Strelitzia* occurs only after extended storage at low temperatures, but flower opening is also affected by short term exposure to chilling temperatures. The effects of treatments aimed at preventing the chilling response will also be reported.